

ACADIA IN THE REVOLUTION

Before the treaty of 1763, which followed the fall of Quebec, the whole country east of the Penobscot River, in Maine, was held by France under the name "Acadia." This territory has since been divided into three distinct political states. Each of them was at one time or another the scene of the operations here briefly narrated, and the French term is therefore made use of as more conveniently indicating the scope of the action.

At the period of the Revolution that part of Acadia now known as New Brunswick contained, according to the best estimate, about one thousand inhabitants. The only points of settlement were the St. John's River, and the vicinity of Chignecto and Chepody bays; the first included in the county of Sunbury, and the latter in Westmoreland. Adjoining the latter, on the south, is the county of Cumberland, in Nova Scotia, unquestionably the most productive part of that province. Here stood the two rival forts, *Beau Sejour* (afterward Fort Cumberland) and Lawrence, separated from each other by the little stream of Missiquash. The former was built by the French in 1750, to defend the region against the invading English; the latter was built by the English soon after as a counterpoise to the French stronghold, receiving the name of the commander of the force, Major Lawrence. *Beau Sejour* has long been abandoned as a military station, while the walls of its younger rival have been levelled by the hand of time.

"So universal," says Kidder, "was the sympathy for the Americans in the county of Cumberland, that in the townships of Truro, Onslow, and Londonderry only five persons would take the oath of allegiance to the British government, and therefore their members were excluded from the House of Assembly. In Kings County, N. S., a large liberty pole was cut and made ready to be hoisted, when the arrival of a detachment of Rangers put a stop to the movement."

Halifax was at this time the only port of sufficient importance to be affected by the tea tax, and this as well as other Eastern cities had merchants and civil officers who uttered their protests against the measure, and opposed the importation of the article, thereby losing royal office and favor. A "tea-party" was called, but was prevented from meeting by a merchant who was invited, but who proved more subservient to the tyranny than expected. (Murdoch's "History of Nova Scotia," vol. 2, p. 522 *et seq.*) But the port was expected to become the chief military station of Great Britain in

America, and the government patronage was too powerful, so that the spirit of freedom was practically extinguished there before the war broke out.

In Cumberland County, however, as in the more western colonies, a regularly chosen Committee of Safety assumed the direction of military operations, and on November 13, 1776, petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts for aid in men, arms, and ammunition. The inhabitants of this county were principally Scotch-Irish families and their descendants, numbering one thousand one hundred and seventy-six. In consequence of this patriotic action a strong force was sent into the region, and many citizens were forced to fly, finding refuge chiefly in Massachusetts from the control of a cruel government.

One of these patriots was John Allan, a member of the Assembly; and it is to him more than any other that we owe the preservation to the Union of all of Maine east of the Penobscot. He was subjected to the pain of leaving his wife and children behind him in his flight, and in spite of his efforts to rescue them they remained for two years, some in imprisonment, others under espionage, and all in great distress.

Among the more fortunate refugees was Jonathan Eddy, who found a quiet home for his family in Massachusetts. He soon obtained from the authorities of that commonwealth a commission as colonel, with permission to make a military expedition against Fort Cumberland (*Beau Sejour*), in the expectation that the province would be delivered from British rule.

The military operations in the northeast began by the capture of the British armed schooner *Margaretta*, by a party from Machias, in June, 1775. This was the first vessel of the enemy captured in the Revolution. The *Margaretta* had come to Machias to convoy a cargo of lumber to Boston for the use of Gage's army. The people had recently erected a liberty pole, of which they were quite proud, but it was an offence to the master of the *Margaretta*, and he ordered that it should be taken down, on penalty of a bombardment of the little village. A town meeting was at once called, to meet on Saturday, when the people voted not to take it down. Some influential persons persuaded the irate captain to wait for another meeting, to be held on Monday.

On Sunday, while on shore, the captain himself narrowly escaped capture, and the next morning his convoy, manned by the young men of the place, pursued the schooner out to sea, and after a short but brisk engagement took her with all her armament and supplies unharmed. She was manned by forty men all told, and her armament consisted of ten six-pounders, twenty swivels and two wall-guns, though not all were mounted; she was also supplied with an abundance of small arms, ammunition, and pro-

visions. The crew of the lumber sloop consisted of about thirty men and boys, only twenty of whom had muskets, the rest being armed with pitchforks and axes; their only cannon was a wall-piece.

The victors received the thanks of the Massachusetts Congress, and two of the leaders were at once commissioned to cruise against the enemy. A portion of the armament of the prize was transferred to the wood-sloop, which was now named *The Liberty*, and she at once proceeded to cruise under the command of Captain Jeremiah O'Brien. It was reported that the British schooner *Diligent* with a tender was on the coast making surveys, and a few days later O'Brien, in *The Liberty*, and Foster, the other commissioned officer, in the wood-sloop, encountered the vessels they were in search of. Stephen Smith, a bold fisherman, with a few other men in a boat, had already surprised the captain of the *Diligent* while away from his vessel with but a small attendance, and captured them. The *Diligent* and her tender, therefore, fell an easy prey to the two *Machias* privateers.

The next incident in this quarter was the attack upon old Fort Frederick, at St. Johns, by Smith, in a sloop manned by *Machias* men. The fort and barracks were burned, and a brig laden with provisions for General Gage was captured.

The encouragement that these successes gave to the patriot cause in this region enabled Colonel Eddy to obtain men for his ambitious undertaking. At *Machias* he secured the services of Captain West and about twenty others, with whom, in September, 1776, he proceeded to Passamaquoddy Bay, where he was joined by a few more. From thence he continued to St. Johns, ascending to Maugerville, the chief settlement, some sixty miles up the river. The earliest English settlement on the St. Johns was at Maugerville, which was colonized from Essex, Massachusetts, in 1762. "The party amounted to near twenty men, besides two families that took passage from Newburyport, May 16, 1762, to St. John's River" (Chubb's "Sketches of New Brunswick," p. 101). At this time the number of families in this place was about one hundred, and all were earnestly devoted to the American cause.

On the 14th of May, 1776, the citizens of St. Johns had assembled in the meeting-house at Maugerville and chosen a committee "to make immediate application to the Congress, or General Assembly of Massachusetts Bay, for relief under their present distressed circumstances." At the same meeting a series of resolutions as positive and extended as those of any New England town, were framed and adopted; and then the whole assembly subscribed to them. These resolutions formed a complete declaration of independence. In memoranda accompanying the official copy of

the resolutions, it is stated that "one hundred and twenty-five have signed, and that twelve or thirteen have not, nine of these being at the mouth of the river."

There joined Eddy's party here, one captain, one lieutenant, and twenty-five privates of the English, and sixteen Indians. His whole force now amounted to seventy-two men. Early in October they set off for Cumberland in whale-boats and canoes, arriving at Chepody Bay in a few days without having met with any adverse circumstances. Here they captured a lieutenant and thirteen men, who had been stationed on Chepody Hill to give intelligence of the approach of patriot forces and privateers. Proceeding to Merancook, they were joined by a number of French. A march of twelve miles through the woods brought the company to Sackville, where it was met by the Cumberland Committee of Safety, who freely expressed their uneasiness at the smallness of the force and its lack of artillery and supplies; yet in the hope of an early reinforcement from Maine, they unanimously joined in forwarding the campaign.

A scouting party having reported a sloop of the enemy to be lying aground on the flats below the fort, a party of about thirty was despatched to capture her. After a difficult march, they arrived opposite the sloop, and charged across the flats toward the vessel. The mud was so soft that they sank nearly to their knees at every step, and the unmistakable noise aroused the sentry, who at once alarmed the sergeant of the guard, though thick fog hid them from view. There were fifteen or more men on board, completely armed, and had a gun been fired, it would in a few minutes have brought the garrison from the fort down upon the adventurous besiegers. On coming upon deck, the sergeant ordered his men to fire, but they were told by the leader of the Americans, who overheard the order, that if they fired a single gun every man of them should be put to death. This so frightened the poor fellows that they surrendered without any further effort for defence. As the retreating tide had left the vessel resting on the mud, her sides were so high that the captors could not board without the assistance of the conquered guard, who let down ropes for them to climb up by.

At daybreak the remainder of the force arrived in a schooner and their whale-boats. Their presence was still concealed by the fog, and as soon as the tide had risen so as to float their boats, one party after another of soldiers from the fort came out to the sloop, probably to convey her cargo on shore, for she proved to be heavily loaded with provisions; as fast as the boat crews came on board they were made prisoners and quietly secured below.

The sloop at length began to float, and the fog breaking, the strange craft were discovered by the garrison. Perceiving that the sloop was get-

ting under way, instead of unloading, it dawned upon their astonished minds that she had been "cut out." The guns of the fort soon opened upon her, while a detachment of some sixty men marched down the river to attack the little squadron. But the vessels had a fair wind, and were already at such distance that the fire upon them from the fort effected no damage; and turning toward Fort Lawrence, on the opposite shore, they were beyond the reach of the muskets. Colonel Eddy here landed a portion of the stores in order to lighten the vessels for offensive operations. Leaving a sufficient guard at the fort, the main portion of the force recrossed to the Cumberland side of the river, and formed a camp about a mile below the fort.

In a few days they were joined by a sufficient number of the inhabitants to swell the force to about one hundred and eighty men. After detailing the necessary guards for the outposts, there remained some eighty men available for an attack upon the fort. A summons to surrender was sent to the commanding officer, but it was met by a prompt refusal. It was therefore decided to make an assault.

The fort embraced about an acre of ground. "Its intrenchment was fifty feet in width; the slope, twenty-five feet; and the embankment within, eighty feet in height, and the breadth on the top, four feet" (Williamson's "History of Maine," vol. ii., p. 452). On the outside were pickets, while along the declivity outside of them, piles of heavy logs were fixed, ready at a touch to roll down upon assailants with overwhelming violence.

The night of the 12th of November proving cloudy and favorable to a secret movement, Colonel Eddy ordered an attack. The approach was made in three divisions, one of which attempted to ascend the bank by ladders, while the other two made a diversion at other points. But the garrison was on the alert, and the attack was repulsed at all points. Colonel Eddy, in a letter written after his return, says that there were about one hundred men in the fort. Murdoch (see his "History of Nova Scotia," p. 577 *et seq.*) says that the fort at Cumberland was at this time "garrisoned by Lieutenant-Colonel Gorham and his Fencibles, two hundred and sixty in number. Of these the rebels surprised and made prisoners of forty privates and some non-commissioned officers from the outposts." The patriots, however, maintained their position before the enemy, and totally cut off his communications, feeling sure of taking the fort on the arrival of the expected reinforcements.

On the 25th of November there arrived in the bay a man-of-war from Halifax; and on the following day she landed nearly two hundred marines. Though observing this reinforcement, Colonel Eddy remained in his camp until the night of the 30th, when he was surprised and driven into the woods.

The stores having been captured or destroyed, the Committee of Safety advised a retreat to St. John, which was accordingly made, and Eddy's force wintered on that river.

But the reduction of Fort Cumberland and the rescue of the region from Great Britain was not yet given up. The patriot force continued to be augmented by refugees from Cumberland, while the man-of-war had returned to Halifax, leaving only some three hundred men at the fort; and in the spring Colonel Eddy importuned the General Court for supplies and a reinforcement of two hundred men, with which he professed the ability to reduce the garrison by investment. A treaty had also been made with the Indians on the St. John's, and in the course of the season it was extended to the Micmacs, in Nova Scotia, and the Quoddies, in Maine. By the excellent management of Colonel John Allan (who also had effected these treaties) the tribes were retained in a neutral relation throughout the war, though the British made great efforts to draw them into their service. The Penobscot, Quoddy, and St. John's Indians, with whom Allan had made a defensive alliance, allowed some of their warriors to enlist in the white companies in the Federal service. In this employ they rendered valuable aid, at least on the occasion of the British attack on Machias, in August of this year (1777).

Before spring, however, Colonel Eddy's force seems to have been wholly scattered, and the entire command in this department had been transferred to Colonel Allan. In February, Allan was endeavoring, by authority of the Massachusetts Council, to effect an exchange of prisoners with Colonel Gorham, the British commander at Cumberland. On May 16, 1777, Colonel Allan writes from Machias, "received advices that the ship Vulture, of fourteen guns, was at St. John, lying before the old fort; that the armed sloop Gage had gone to Cumberland to bring troops to enable the garrison to pursue up the river." The Vulture was the vessel which afterward bore such a prominent part in the treason of Arnold.

In consequence of this information, Colonel Allan, on the 30th of May, set out from Machias in boats for St. John. Intelligence reached him on the way that the British vessels had departed, but he continued his course, and, after a brief delay at Passamaquoddy, arrived in safety on the river on the 2d of June. Leaving a captain and lieutenant with twelve men to guard the falls and annoy the enemy, should any come to repair the fort, Colonel Allan proceeded up the river.

Numerous halts were made on the way to cultivate friendly relations with the parties of Indians who were frequently met. The principal settlement of these was at Aukpaque, situated on the north side of the river, about seven

miles above Fredericton. On Jeffrey's map the name is spelled "Ock-pack." The word indicates a beautiful expansion of the river. There are here numerous islands. Upon the largest of these (Sandous) the Indian fortifications and buildings were situated. A small stream enters the St. John at this point.

On landing, Colonel Allan's party was received by the Indians with a salute of musketry. After a satisfactory conference and needful rest, the force returned to the mouth of the river. Here they made prisoners of two traders who were suspected of having procured the visits of the British vessels. Many of the inhabitants had been pillaged by these enemies, and most of them forced to take the oath of allegiance to the king. As they had by this action gone on record as sworn subjects of the king, and were dejected and fluctuating, Colonel Allan forbore to enter any of their houses or to encamp near them, lest he should compromise them with the royal government.

On the 8th of June intelligence was received by Allan of the capture by West, near the mouth of the river, of a schooner from Halifax, with a valuable cargo, which he sent to Machias for safety. On the tenth, Colonel Shaw, with forty-five men from Machias, arrived at the mouth of the river. On the eleventh, the sloop of war Vulture again came into the harbor, accompanied by a smaller sloop, carrying supplies. The intrepid West boarded the supply vessel and would have overcome her, but such numbers appeared setting out from the ship that he thought best to give up the attempt. Yet the British were quite intimidated by this action, and left the harbor the next day.

On the 24th of June Colonel Allan writes urgently for three or four hundred men to defend the river and to rescue the oppressed people of Cumberland. A few days later there arrived in the harbor a squadron of the enemy, consisting of the ship Mermaid, of thirty-six guns, and the sloops Vulture and Hope, with their tenders, detached from Sir George Collier's fleet to operate with the force at Cumberland against the patriots in that region, and on the St. John.

Early in the morning of the 30th of June, the guard stationed on the "Reach," a short distance above Grand Bay, saw a barge coming up from the mouth of the river, and shortly after they discovered seven others lying on their oars about a mile distant. Information was immediately sent to the main body of the American force, which at once retired up the river, leaving Captain Dyer with a dozen men to observe the movements of the enemy. The company in boats soon landed, to the number of about one hundred and fifty. Captain Dyer allowed them to come within good mus-

ket shot, then fired and retreated. On the retreat they fell in with the flank guard, who fired upon them at ten or twelve yards distance, killing three and wounding two more. Captain Dyer immediately retreated up the river, taking with him his wounded men. The British loss in this skirmish was six killed and wounded.

The two British ships from New York, the *Mermaid* and the *Ambuscade* (32 guns), with a third vessel, were ordered to cruise between Machias Harbor and Mount Desert, to intercept the Americans on their way eastward. Troops to the number of three hundred now set off up the river in pursuit of the patriots, with special orders to capture Colonel Allan, for whom, dead or alive, a reward of four hundred dollars was offered.

Allan was at this time at Maudgerville with the Indians, and he at once removed with them further up the river. Between him and the British force was a part of two companies under Captains Dyer and West, and on the 3d of July Colonel Allan gave these the permission, which they had asked, to retire to Maine by way of Passamaquoddy. They were closely followed in this retreat by the main body of the enemy; but from this time we hear no more of them in New Brunswick.

The British force now turned up the river, searching at every point for refugees from Cumberland, and for Colonel Allan. Wherever they could learn of an inhabitant who had furnished food or shelter to the Americans, they seized his goods and burned his buildings. The Cumberland people, finding that there would be no safety for them on the St. John, a few days later, guided by the Indians and the friendly Acadians resident upon the river, retired by the way of the Schoodic lakes to the coast of Maine.

Colonel Allan now kept closely to the Indians, in order to secure their continued adhesion to the American cause, and leaving Aukpaque, they retired to the French settlements a few miles farther up the river. The latter people were those Acadians who, in 1755, fled from their homes about the Basin of Minas in order to escape transportation by victorious Britain. They were ever found friendly to the American cause; and they were now ready and desirous of aiding Colonel Allan to the extent of their means, though at the risk of their own safety.

The British superintendent of Indians in Acadia, amply supplied with the means usually required to secure their attachment, was assiduous in his efforts to gain them over, offering pardon for past offences and security from all harm to such as would abandon their connection with the patriots. A document long in the hands of the High Sheriff of St. John County, N. B., is an invoice of supplies sent the Indian agent at a certain date. It has a list of seventeen different kinds of articles suitable to savage wants, and in

large quantities. He also had the aid of a Romish priest, whose influence was very great with those rude yet reverential children of the forest; but though the Indians availed themselves of the priest's professional services, they would not yield to his solicitations to unite themselves to the British cause. The Micmacs, in Nova Scotia, even were only partially won over, while all the favor the enemy obtained from the other tribes was their neutrality, and protection to the British crews while engaged in cutting masts on the streams emptying into Passamaquoddy Bay.

On the patriot side, Colonel Allan, at all times almost empty-handed, made hazardous journeys to their settlements or to other localities appointed for conferences with the Marachites, on the eastern shore of New Brunswick, and the Micmacs of Nova Scotia. On account of the non-arrival of promised supplies he many times found it necessary to leave his two boys, aged respectively eleven and thirteen years, as hostages with one or the other of the eastern tribes for months together.

It was chiefly by their personal regard for him that Allan was able to hold these tribes so long and against such odds. An incident or two will illustrate their devotion to him. The British were very bitter against him, and for years a price was set upon his head. The soldiers and even civilians sought, at every opportunity, to take him, dead or alive. As might be supposed, all dissatisfied Indians were incited against him, by whom his life was attempted repeatedly. One day, while sitting at the table in his room busy with some papers, an Indian acquaintance of the family entered. A few words were exchanged, and while the other members of the family were conversing with the colonel, the Indian, instead of going out, slipped unnoticed behind the wide open door. Presently another Indian—a powerful savage of the Micmac tribe—strode into the room, and directly up to Colonel Allan, who was seated in such a way that he could not readily rise.

The Indian drew his long hunting knife, and brandished it in the air, the blow probably delayed a little by the steady eye of Allan fixed upon him. Before the blow could fall the hidden Indian sprang forward and felled the intended assassin to the floor. The treatment of the offender was very merciful. By Allan's direction he was simply deprived of his weapons, placed in his own canoe, and started toward home.

At another time, when Colonel Allan was confined to his room with the gout, some members of the tribe he was with learned of a plan of the British to capture him while in this condition, and they at once wrapped him up in blankets and carried him to a remote place in the woods.

But it was not the Indians alone who were attached to him. The captain of an English merchant vessel one day sent a polite note, inviting him

to dinner on board his vessel, in remembrance of former times. This incident appears to have occurred on the St. Croix River, where the Indians had guaranteed a certain degree of protection to British vessels. Colonel Allan was pleased with the captain's courtesy, and was about setting out, when Captain Dyer, who suspected treachery, begged that he might go instead of his superior. The Colonel refused at first, but finally consented. Dyer proceeded to the vessel, and no sooner was he on deck than the perfidious captain cried in exultation, "Now, thank God, I have got you, you —— rebel!"

"No, you haven't got him," replied the brave Dyer; "you've only got me."

The enraged Englishman took Captain Dyer to Halifax, where this generous and devoted friend remained a prisoner of war until his death.

At length the St. John's tribe, his chief lever for influencing the more eastern, were so closely pressed on one side by the military power of the British, and on the other by the tempting gifts and stores of Mr. Franklin, their agent, that Allan decided to retire with them to Maine. Accordingly the whole body of the St. John's tribe, says Allan, "to the number of 128 canoes, containing near 500 men, women and children, left the river with me, . . . only a few families remaining to keep up a claim and give intelligence, when there was not more than a week's provisions for the whole. They left their little plantations well improved (and a good prospect) with a great part of their clothing, and after 28 days' journey, arrived at Machias, suffering many hardships and difficulties by the excessive heat and the lowness of the streams, which greatly obstructed the canoes." This journey was made in July and August, 1777.

From this time until the close of the war Colonel Allan and his wild wards remained mostly at Machias and St. Andrew's Point (the latter near the head of Passamaquoddy Bay) small parties of the Indians frequently making trips eastward, to keep up a friendly association with the other tribes.

This narrative, evolved chiefly from the mass of documents found in Mr. Kidder's valuable collection, gives, I think, a fair and perhaps a sufficiently complete view of the Revolutionary struggle in our neighboring provinces in the northeast. Our relations with the inhabitants of the Acadian region, during the century just closing, have been very intimate, and it is to be doubted whether there has been for a considerable time other than friendly feelings between the masses of the people in our contiguous territories, who came so near being of the same nation. If some portion of the citizens of each have at times been inflamed against those in the other, it must be attributed to the conflicting interests of the two great empires to which we respectively belong, rather than to any civil incompatibility or personal dislike.

GEORGE J. VARNEY

